

Fact sheets are good to have on hand. You can give them to anyone who wants more information. They also are a good basis for web material.

### Web Sites

The web is a good place to post reports. You can send a news release that hits the high spots of a report, then refer reporters to a web site for more information.

### News Conferences

New conferences should be reserved only for important announcements that may generate a substantial number of questions from the news media. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I really need a news conference? Could I accomplish the same goal with a news release and providing someone to do interviews if needed?
- Is the person making the announcement newsworthy? You can focus attention on an old issue by having someone interesting talk about it.
- Is a news conference the best way to get attention or, should you plan a media event?



### Media Events

A media event is one that has action that can be photographed such as a demonstration of the new e-citation program in action. In general, a media event will receive more coverage than a news conference. In addition to providing reporters with news, media events offer visuals. Television stations depend on visual stories and a good photo can mean better placement in a newspaper.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Who does this announcement affect?
- Can you get affected parties to participate in the media event?
- Is the location the story?

- What visuals will help tell your story?

### Interviews

Often newspapers have reporters who cover the courts. You might choose to sit down with that reporter to talk about the courts and your program in general. If you're new to a situation or your program is new or the reporter is new, sit-downs can be very helpful.

Don't always expect a story from an interview, but this is an excellent way to establish yourself as the expert on a particular issue. Similarly, if there are small developments in a news story that aren't really worth a news release, press conference or media event, you might want to call the reporters who already have covered the story and give them updates.

### Columns

Smaller newspapers, especially weeklies, may be interested in a regular column. Several judges already are writing columns in their local newspapers. Columns are a good way to help readers understand the workings of the court system.

### Op-Eds

This is an opportunity for you to write a column that provides more than mere facts. The "op" stands for opinion. The "eds" for editorials. This is your chance to share your division, section or office opinion about a given issue. Most large newspapers will not run local op-eds if they are published in other papers. Smaller papers may run op-eds that ran elsewhere.

Court officials subject to the Judicial Code of Ethics should keep those rules in mind when writing a column or op-ed piece.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: PUBLIC RECORDS